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Georgia RI I

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and east of the Rioni) are Georgian, and Imeret'ian and other west Georgian dialects are spoken there. To the Georgian area belongs also Adjaristan (Adžaristan), the valley of the Acharis-Tskhali, which borders in the south and west on Azerbaidjanian and Osman speaking peoples, and in the west, with the Laz people. The Adjarians (Acharians), like their neighbors, are of Mohammedan faith.

T'ushuri, Khevsuri and P'shaveli

The northeasternmost Georgians, living in the alpine parts of the central Caucasus, are an interesting and distinct people. Although they speak East-K'art'velian dialects and are Orthodox Christians, the Georgians do not consider them as the same nation. The reasons are not only their inaccessibility and age-long seclusion and independence, but also customs and manners which in this way have been preserved from by-gone times. These remote people make up three tribes: the T'ushuri, Khevsuri, and P'shaveli, who live in the high valleys of the source rivers of the Andi-Koisu, Aragvi, and Argun, and of the Iora. In sharp contrast to other Caucasian peoples, blue eyes are not rare with them. Shields, spears, straight long swords, iron or steel helmets, coats of mail and armor were worn by many of them (usually the Khevsurs) as late as the nineteenth century, and in a few instances, even after the Russian Revolution.

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Khevsur, Pschv, Tushin

C. G. [713] Some had the sign of the cross upon their shields, so that they looked exactly like medieval European knights and Crusaders.

C. G. 764 171 Up in the country of the Khevsurs a few very ancient churches can be found; near these, often isolated, stand some typically Khevsurian tomb structures or burial chapels unique in the Caucasus. Funeral ceremonies held by the Khevsurs are (or were ?) often accompanied by horse races, an ancient custom of horse-breeding nomads of the steppes. (This custom is reminiscent of the "dokhia" [δόχια] of some Turkic tribes in the plains near the Altai, described by the Byzantine envoy Menandros Protector, who was sent in 568 to the Great-Khan of the Türküt in the Altai region, a territory which is now part of northwestern Mongolia.) Perhaps the Khevsurs borrowed this custom from the Alans, the nomadic ancestors of the present-day Oset'i.

S'vanet'ians

C. G. 162 101 Another K'art'velian group which in its mountainous seclusion has preserved numerous ancient customs and traditions is the Svans (or Shvan, Strabon's Soanes [Σοάνες]), who live in the high valleys of the Ingur and Ts'khenis-Tskhali, just south of the central high massifs of the Caucasus, between Gvandra and Shkhara. Their language is the most archaic of all the K'art'velian tongues. The Svans are

C. [141] outstanding for their height; two meters is not rare.

C. G. 291 is used sparingly and limited to patterns in white on shoes and boots, and silver mountings on the belt. The Pshav have adopted Georgian attire.

C. G. 411 Not only is the Caucasian sober in the use of embellishments on his clothing, which is in itself quite elegant; he also does not wear any ornaments or trinkets. His esthetic sense finds an outlet in the decoration of his arms, however. The sheaths and hilts of daggers and sabers and the grips of pistols were often made of gold or silver, and adorned with precious stones or with niello-work (the latter also on the barrels). The Caucasian dagger--considered as important a part of the attire as is a tie in the West--has a straight, broad, double-edged blade with a groove (blood trough) running down the middle. Formerly, the armature consisted of one or two pistols, tucked behind the belt, a rifle, which the mountaineers always carried in a cover, and a saber. On the belt, various accessories (powderhorn, C. G. grease container, flint, etc.) were worn. Only • [713] the Khevsur preserved until quite recently full medieval armor: helmets, coats of mail, shields, swords, clubs and toothed thumb-C. G. rings. The armor was worn on festive occa- [292] sions and also whenever a man might expect to be attacked because he was involved in a blood-feud, which was usually the case.

C. G. 291 The costume of the Caucasian women shows much more local variation than that of